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(CIA)

WASHINGTON (UPI) - CIA DIRECTOR STANSFIELD TURNER URGENTLY HAS CALLED ON CONGRESS FOR LEGISLATION TO PROTECT THE IDENTITIES OF INTELLIGENCE AGENTS.

IN A MAY 10 LETTER READ ON THE SENATE FLOOR TODAY BY SEN. LLOYD BENTSEN, D-TEXAS, TURNER CALLED FOR PROTECTING AGENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES AGAINST EXPOSURE, INJURY OR DEATH.

BENTSEN HAS INTRODUCED A BILL THAT COULD SEND PAST OR PRESENT CIA EMPLOYEES TO JAIL FOR UP TO 10 YEARS IF THEY REVEALED THE IDENTITIES OF INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS.

IN HIS FOUR-PAGE LETTER, TURNER SAID UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURES OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION CONCERNING CIA PERSONNEL, SOURCES AND METHODS AND ACTIVITIES "HAVE DAMAGED THE AGENCY'S ABILITY TO PERFORM ITS ASSIGNED MISSION."

"AMONG THE MOST DAMAGING DISCLOSURES, TOTALLY DEVOID OF ANY REDEEMING SOCIAL VALUE, HAVE BEEN THOSE IDENTIFYING CIA PERSONNEL WHOSE AFFILIATION WITH THE AGENCY IS NOT PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED."

TURNER ACKNOWLEDGED MOST OF THE DISCLOSURES HAVE BEEN MADE BY DISAFFECTED FORMER EMPLOYEES "WHO ARE AVOWEDLY DETERMINED TO DESTROY THE AGENCY."

"SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS PRECLUDE OUR CONFIRMING OR DENYING SPECIFIC INSTANCES OF PURPORTED IDENTIFICATION OF CIA PERSONNEL," TURNER SAID. "SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF THESE ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN ACCURATE. THE DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS OF THESE DISCLOSURES HAVE BEEN VARIED AND WIDE-RANGING."

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